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MEMORANDUM

COSVN Resolution 4

1. According to Resolution 4 issued by the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) in September, Communist policy during the first several months of 1974 will consist primarily of launching a "strategic raids campaign", with the object of forcing the South Vietnamese to establish the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord. Although specific targets are not disclosed, Communist combat units are to attack both lightly and densely populated areas to expand the territory under VC control. In addition, the Communist infrastructure in rural areas is to be strengthened, and military proselyting activities are to be intensified throughout South Vietnam.

VC/NVA units had completed preparations for the "strategic raids campaign" during September.

2. Resolution 4 also assesses the overall position of the Communists in South Vietnam as of September. VC figures show that some 20% of the total population is under their control, some one-third of whom are concentrated in the VC Eastern Region which borders Cambodia.

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The 20% figure is certainly exaggerated if firm control of the population is considered, but it is reasonably accurate in describing the totality of VC influence.* 25X1

Nonetheless, the VC face serious difficulties: first, because most of the population under VC control is concentrated in the Eastern Region, the Communists lack a broad geographical base from which to expand their control. As a result, North Vietnamese Assault Youth and troop infiltrators, many of whom are inexperienced, will be required to provide much of the reinforcement for both combat units and the infrastructure, rather than southerners recruited from "liberated areas." Second, "political struggle" activities in general, and proselytizing in particular, have been ineffective in the recent past. Since the 27 January ceasefire, for example, military proselytizing has been only about "10% effective." Finally, the declining level of cooperation with the Khmer Communists has impeded the ability of the VC to purchase rice and other supplies in Cambodia.

25X1 * [redacted] estimates only 5.4 percent of the population under VC influence, but this is significantly understated.

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3. Despite steps [REDACTED]

to remedy the above difficulties -- such as transferring COSVN and region-level cadre to oversee village and hamlet organizations and increasing the number of illegal proselytizing cadre in GVN-controlled urban areas (a significant departure from previous policy) -- a large proportion of COSVN cadre apparently are skeptical that the plan prescribed in Resolution 4 will be a success. Most important, they argue that VC/NVA combat units generally are inferior to those of the government and that more time is needed to prepare them for the limited military activity which is scheduled to occur. In addition, the VC lack the capability to maintain large food caches, not only because of their deteriorated relations with the KC, but also because of the success the GVN has had with the economic blockade of VC areas.

4. Resolution 4 emphasizes that near-term Communist military activity is to be considered as a counter to government ceasefire violations rather than a prelude to a major offensive. This confirms other recent reporting and, along with the low level of troop infiltration since September, suggests that Hanoi is not planning

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large-scale, prolonged [redacted] for the near
future. Because Resolution 4 underlines the importance
of political activities in expanding VC control, it
does not represent a major shift in strategy since
the issuance of Directives 2 and 3, which upgraded
the importance of the infrastructure.

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